



## **Recommendation for developing a guideline or policy regarding consultations for the care of high-risk pregnant women**

### **Background:**

Perinatal outcomes have benefited from appropriate maternal care through effective risk identification, care in risk-appropriate settings, and maternal transports to tertiary care facilities when necessary. The goal of providing appropriate maternal care in a hospital is facilitated by early and ongoing assessment of risk to prevent, recognize, and treat conditions associated with maternal morbidity and mortality. To realize this goal it is necessary for a hospital to require a level of competence and proficiency in managing high-risk pregnant women and to support and improve communication and collaboration between care providers that provide different levels of care.

### **Therefore, it is recommended that:**

All hospitals should develop policies, guidelines, or credentialing criteria, based on their specific needs and circumstances, regarding consultation for the care of high-risk pregnant women. Policies minimally should address the following issues:

- 1. How “high-risk” is defined.** Risk assessment should include consideration of both antepartum and intrapartum factors that can negatively impact delivery and maternal/neonatal outcome.
- 2. What practitioner training, experience, and credentialing is required to care for “high-risk” maternity patients.**
- 3. When consultation with a practitioner having greater “high-risk” maternity care training or experience is required.**
- 4. If a Level I or Level II, the relationship with a Level III facility.** Inter-hospital relationships should address all necessary services, including health care, professional consultation and education, transports, and outcome evaluations.
- 5. Within a Level III, referral to a higher level of care may also be necessary and require a policy addressing when consultation with an MFM necessary.**

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